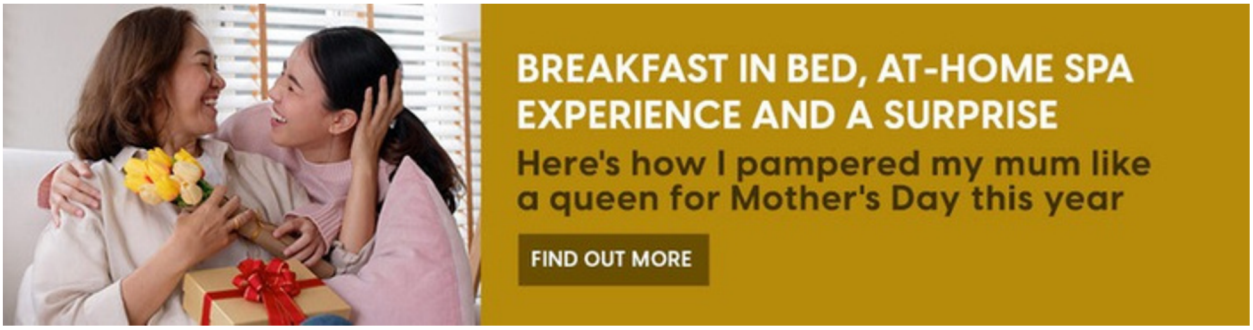


BUSINESS

Early Learning's Fun Preschool Reduces Staff Turnover and Boosts Retention Rates

APRIL 27, 2023 PUBLISHED AT 9:00 AM

Join our telegram channel for the latest updates

Local preschool's creative strategies foster a positive work culture

SINGAPORE - Media OutReach - 27 April 2023 - High staff turnover rate has always been a topic of concern in Singapore, especially more so in the early childhood education sector. One preschool, however, is bucking the trend of high turnover rates with its enviable staff retention numbers, with over 50% of its staff having served in the school for 10 years or longer.

Early Learnings's Fun Preschool (ELF) is a small and independently owned Preschool that was founded in 2009 by local optometrist and entrepreneur, Andy Teo, and has since been engaging families and children in the upper Bukit Timah area with 60-70 students at any point in time. As a developmental optometrist, he conducts regular annual eye screenings for his students from 18 months to ensure that his students are able to see clearly.

With reasons such as long working hours, a stressful working environment, lack of a work-life balance, high emotional demands and many others, it comes as no surprise that the turnover rate in the early childhood education sector in Singapore has been between 10 – 15 per cent over the last few years, in a workforce of about 23,000 people. From this, it is worth noting that while passion is essential and praiseworthy in such an industry, it is not enough to retain educators in this industry.

While Andy Teo, director of ELF Preschool does recognize the importance of ensuring the happiness of the children, he also places equal emphasis on the satisfaction and well-being of the educators. Currently, over half of his team, most of which are locals, have worked alongside him for a decade or longer, with some having been with him since the school's founding. On average, each staff member has been with ELF Preschool for 8 years.

Andy Teo, therefore, recognises that early childhood education is a physically demanding job with a high level of burnout and continues to find interesting ways to foster staff retention.

ELF Preschool instils a sense of family and togetherness in the workplace, the staff members are more inclined to support each other in various situations, such as aiding a colleague with their lesson planning, or taking over their class, if the colleague is absent due to various circumstances. This strong sense of bonding amongst colleagues has been a source of comfort, ensuring that everyone can take time off when needed, with the assurance that their colleagues will step in to provide support and maintain work-life balance.

Andy Teo, who takes pride in seeing happy teachers and happy children in the school, believes that replicating this close-knit familial atmosphere may not be easily achievable. "Currently, there are no plans for a second school," says Andy Teo. "Instead, we wish to focus our efforts on enhancing the current school's standards and maintaining the nurturing environment that has been cultivated

ELF Preschool continues to consult with and identify the needs of their staff, which have aided in their efforts to retain staff, leading Andy Teo to invest in the development of an app to further reduce the staff's workloads, assisting them through tasks such as creation and organisation of lesson plans, evaluation, quantitative analysis of child's development and report writing so that staff can work more efficiently and reduce administrative efforts.

At ELF Preschool, staff take ownership through creative problem-solving and critical thinking, and are given autonomy to make individual or collective decisions, leading to higher levels of job satisfaction. Major decisions are also discussed with the staff, rather than a top-down system, which further encourages unity and cooperation.

In addition, ELF preschool has implemented two rounds of salary increments in the year 2022, once in June and another in December, providing an increment of 8% to 12% for the full year. ELF Preschool has adopted several government initiatives that have allowed the school to raise the reemployment age to 65 and offer part-time reemployment for senior staff. Furthermore, a host of schemes from Work Pro such as Time Banking and Flexi Place have been implemented to bring about a more stable work life balance to the staff and educators.

Current staff members attest to the positive impact of these strategies and acknowledge the value of working in an organization that prioritizes their well- being. Mrs Prem, Principal says, "Working at the school makes me happy because I know I am allowed to make decisions that can help the school run smoothly. I truly find it rewarding to know that I can make a positive impact and watch our children and educators grow!"

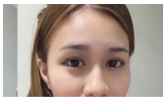
According to Mdm Chen, a Chinese preschool educator, "As an educator in our school, I appreciate the close attention our management pays to our needs and well-being. They actively communicate with us to ensure our happiness at work and have introduced several initiatives aimed at striking a balance between work and personal life, all while maintaining the smooth running of the school." The educators in ELF Preschool share a common sentiment and expressed their delight in witnessing the growth and progress of their toddlers to preschoolers and finally getting into primary school, further stating that they hope the children will adopt good values from their time at ELF Preschool.

For more information, please contact 6466 4045, admin@elfpreschool.com.sg or visit their official website at https://www.elfpreschool.com.sg

Hashtag: #EarlyLearningsFun #ELFPreschool #AndyTeo #EarlychildhoodEducation

https://www.facebook.com/elfpreschoolsg/

BUSINESS

AROUND THE WEB

Apply forSingapore's first eco-friendly credit card and enjoy S$150 cashback!